

find four female and six male *icarus*, all of the typical form. The foodplant was very scarce and the habitat looked quite unsuitable for the species.

Dowdeswell (1981) reports that in August 1938 he and Ford estimated the population of *icarus* to be between 450 and 500 adults. They also estimated the population of *M. jurtina* as being about 8650. I saw only small numbers of *jurtina* and the population now must be far below those old records.

Dense growths of bracken and bramble occurred in patches on all the other islands I saw on my visit, but they also contained suitable sites for *icarus*. The species was observed in good numbers on St. Marys, St. Martins, St. Agnes, and St. Helens. On all of these, the female uppersides exhibited the usual shade of blue, and while the aberrations *arcuata*, *costajuncta* and *basijuncta* were more frequent on St. Marys than I have found them elsewhere (Plate H, Figs. 7-8), the majority of specimens nevertheless exhibited typical undersides. It is perhaps possible that Ford's form of *icarus* might exist on one of the other small, uninhabited islands, but it would be quite an undertaking to make a round trip to investigate this. If it does occur it would probably have had to evolve independently of the Tean race, given the non-migratory nature of the species, and this seems unlikely. It is therefore probable that this unique race has been lost.

Acknowledgement

I am grateful to Mr David Wilson for photographing the specimens depicted in Plate H.

References

- Dowdeswell, W.H., 1981. *The life of the Meadow Brown*. Heinmann Educational Books, London.
- Ford, E.B., 1945. *Butterflies*. The New Naturalist Series, Collins, London.

Some nationally rare Tachinidae (Diptera) from Brent Reservoir including the second British record of *Thecocarcelia acutangulata* (Macquart)

A female *Thecocarcelia acutangulata* was taken while collecting in and around Carr woodland on the East SSSI at Brent Reservoir (TQ2287, VC 21 Middlesex) on 3 October 1994. This is the second British record of this species which is categorised as Vulnerable (RDB 2) by S.J. Falk (1991. A review of the scarce and threatened flies of Great Britain (Part 1). *Research and survey in nature conservation*. 39: Nature Conservancy Council). The specimen keys clearly to *T. acutangulata* (in Belshaw, R. 1993. *Tachinid Flies (Diptera: Tachinidae)*. *Handbooks for the Identification of British Insects*. 10: 4a(i). Royal Entomological Society of London) and its identity has subsequently been confirmed by N. Wyatt. It is a medium-sized tachinid fly and the current specimen measures 7.5mm from the base of the antennae to the tip of its abdomen. Critical key characters include the very large

hairless eyes and narrow genae, and the presence of four katepisternal bristles. In addition it may be noted that the body and legs are black and it is a heavily dusted species, the patterns shifting with point of view. Viewed obliquely from in front there is a narrow dust stripe on each side of the scutum between the dorsocentral and achrostical bristles. These extend slightly post-suturally. The humeri and the sides of the scutum including the supra-alar area are heavily dusted ash-grey as is the basal 40% of the scutellar dorsum. On the thoracic pleura a broad band of dense dusting extends obliquely down covering 80% of the anepisternum and the posterior 60% of the katepisternum.

This species was added to the British List in 1986 (Wyatt, N.P., *Thecocarcelia acutangulata* (Macquart) (Diptera: Tachinidae), new to Britain. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine*, **122**: 203-204) on the basis of a male collected at Hadleigh Wood, South Essex (VC 18) on 21/22 July 1954 by D.J. & J.A. Clark, a specimen which remained unrecognised for two decades. The small number of specimens from continental Europe in the Natural History Museum (London) would suggest that this species is rather scarce but widely distributed in Europe (N. Wyatt, *pers. comm.*). The distribution of this species in the Palaearctic region is given as France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary, Italy, the USSR (Transcaucasus) and Japan by Herting and Dely-Drakovits (*in*: Soós, Á. & Papp, L., 1993. Anthomyiidae-Tachinidae. *Catalogue of Palaearctic Diptera*, **13**: Hungarian Natural History Museum, Budapest). The same authors cite only one other member of the genus from continental Europe. This is *Thecocarcelia trichops* Herting, not known from the UK and the type specimen of which is from France. Reared specimens of *T. acutangulata* in the Natural History Museum are all Afrotropical and are associated with five species of hesperiid host (as *T. incendens* (Rondani)) from *Thymelicus lineola* Ochs., the Essex Skipper butterfly (which occurs at Brent Reservoir) (Carl, K.P., 1968. *Thymelicus lineola* (Lepidoptera: Hesperidae) and its parasites in Europe. *The Canadian Entomologist* **100**(8): 785-801). The same author suggests that this fly might utilise different hosts at different times of the year. Carl also refers to a rearing record from the hesperiid *Parnara mathias* in Senegal. While R.W. Crosskey lists eight species of Afrotropical hesperiid as hosts of *Thecocarcelia* spp. he also cites one host species from each of the families Nymphalidae, Sphingidae and Noctuidae (1984. Annotated keys to the genera of Tachinidae (Diptera) found in tropical and southern Africa. *Annals of the Natal Museum*, **26**(1): 189-337). *T. acutangulata* was added to the Finnish fauna on the basis of rearing records from *Clostera curtula* (L.), the Chocolate-Tip and from *C. pigra* (Hufn.), the Small Chocolate-Tip (Notodontidae) (Hackman, W., 1981. För Finland nya flugor samt tre övriga tillägg till förteckningen över Finlands Diptera. *Notulae Entomologicae*, **61**: 225-226). While Belshaw (*op. cit.*) questions Hackman's host records, the

present author knows of no *prima facie* reason for doing so and, in common with many other members of the Tachinidae, the host range of this species requires further study. On the basis of the evidence cited here it would appear that, while members of the HesperIIDae are the preferred hosts of *Thecocarcelia* spp., members of other families of Lepidoptera are also utilised. In addition there may be a seasonal element to host selection in this species.

The following Rare (RDB 3) (Falk, *op. cit.*) species of tachinid fly were also recorded from Brent Reservoir: *Anthomyopsis nigrisquamata* (Zett.) (det. confirmed S.J. Falk), one male, two females, 8 August 1995, East SSSI, TQ2187: *Wagneria gagatea* Rob.-Des., one male, 28 May 1995, North SSSI, TQ2188. I would like to thank Nigel Wyatt for his valuable help in preparation of this note.— JOHN R. DOBSON, 46 Elmwood Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 8AH.

Channel Islands fauna is not “British”

I would like to comment on a certain aspect of Robert Burrow's article on the Macrolepidoptera of Jersey (*antea*: 133). In this he refers to nine species of moth as valuable additions to the British list; although recorded from the Channel Islands.

I feel it is time that it was made quite clear to your readers that records from Jersey are NOT referable to the British list. Bermuda is a British island, so is Jersey; but in neither case do their fauna qualify for inclusion.

On the other hand the Republic of Ireland is not British, but, biogeographically, it is part of the British Isles. Its fauna is referable to “The British List”.

What worries me somewhat, is that fact that Mr Burrow cites Newman, as long ago as 1872, as stating that the Guernsey Underwing *Polyphaenis sericata* was British. Thus long ago the fallacy persists. It is time it was shown the killing bottle!— CLIVE SIMPSON, 4 Plowden Park, Aston Rowant, Oxon OX9 5SD.

EDITORIAL NOTE: There can be no doubt that Brigadier Simson is absolutely correct in that the Channel Islands are biogeographically distinct from mainland Britain, whatever their political allegiance Mr Burrow's assertion that the recorded species are new to the British List is, however, technically correct, no matter how much it goes against the grain. My (editorial) interpretation of what is implied by “The British List” is the work by J.D. Bradley and D.S. Fletcher (1979, *A Recorder's Log Book or Label List of British Butterflies and Moths*, Harley Books) and its subsequent revisions; in this work, Lepidoptera from the Channel Islands are included. I note also that Maitland Emmet persists in the inclusion of Channel Islands species in his *Chart showing the life history and habits of the British Lepidoptera*, which features on pages 61 to 303 of *The Moths and Butterflies of Great*